

USGS (Continued)

Attitudes and Accommodations: Working with Our Disabilities

The USGS fifth conference on Working with People with Disabilities focused on attitudes and accommodations for successfully working with people with disabilities. Presentations emphasized policies and laws governing employment of people with disabilities and the availability of technology that can be used by people with disabilities so that they can succeed in the workplace.

Geri Jewell, nationally known disability right's advocate, was the keynote speaker for the conference, held November 20-21 at the USGS National Center. Many vendors and exhibitors took part. There were workshops on accommodations, diversity, etiquette, physical barriers, and communications. Special features included Fidos for Freedom, a program that trains dogs to help people with impaired hearing or mobility.

A team of hearing-assist, mobility-assist, and therapy dogs and their handlers showed how these trained dogs can bring independence to their owners. Kids on the Block, a troupe of puppets with and without disabilities that travels around the community, help educate children about differences, disabilities, and social concerns. And the GeoSounds, the USGS singers, provided musical performances.



Whistles and Children at National Center



Young and old alike enjoy the model trains at the USGS National Center on Community Night. At right below, the man and boy using microscopes are learning how trains and science are connected as they study the minerals from which trains are made.



Model trains—Lionel, American Flyer, and LGB—were in motion and on track at the USGS National Center in Reston, Virginia, during the holiday season. And more than 2,000 visitors enjoyed the exhibit and activities, which were open to the public on weekdays between December 18 and 27.

A special invitation was issued to the community for Community Night on December 19. This event included hands-on activities, videos, and expanded hours for the Earth Science Information Center map and book sales store besides the train exhibit.

Employees, families, friends, and neighbors dropped by to check out the trains at this annual event and learned about work being done by the USGS through tours, exhibits, demonstrations, and videos about maps and science. Several invited exhibitors were on hand, including the Federal Railroad Administration, Metro, Operation Lifesaver, and Virginia Railway Express.

Some popular activities on Community Night were the interactive CD-ROM entitled Topographic Field Trip, fossil and rock rubbings made into holiday ornaments, tours of the printing plant, the video The Magic School Bus Blows Its Top, and an interactive bird/bird song identification game. Handouts of key chains, zipper pulls, travel planners, and coloring books provided by guest exhibitors were also big hits.



Barbara Shaw, above, Program Coordinator for the Disabilities Programs for the USGS, was chairperson for the conference. Geri Jewell, at left, a disability rights advocate and actress, delivers the keynote address. At far left, the USGS choral group, GeoSounds, with interpreter for the deaf, provide musical entertainment.



Above left, Kids on the Block, with interpreters for the deaf, entertain and educate using puppets with disabilities as a teaching tool. Above right, Fidos for Freedom staff trainer and student. At left, Fidos for Freedom ready for Trick or Treat.

Virtual Tour Free to Schools

The USGS has released a new educational CD-ROM containing an interactive tour of Washington, D.C., that uses topographic maps. Although designed for middle school students, it can be used as an introductory teaching tool for topographic maps at many levels. Students will learn how to examine spatial information and relate it to real-world features through the use of multimedia.

The Topographic Field Trip uses hypermedia to interactively navigate through layers of information by linking sounds, graphics, text, and animation in a game-like adventure. The user interface resembles a video game controller and functions as an interactive map legend.

Students can tour the Nation's Capital and are able to measure distance and direction, determine latitude and longitude, learn map features, determine elevation, find general geographic information on postcards, and examine historical maps.

After landing at Washington National Airport where the computer trip begins and exploring the topographic map of the immediate area, students are required to answer questions in their journals. By correctly answering questions, they earn rail farecards that are used to reach the next area. The students also use their journals to record information that can be saved and later printed.

The journal questions at each tour area highlight different components of topographic maps. When a student has visited all of the tour areas and answered the journal questions correctly, he or she earns a ticket to tour the White House. If the field trip is not completed during one session, the option is available to return to the same area and continue at a later time.

The topographic Field Trip requires a Macintosh system with 256-color, 13-inch or greater monitor; at least 8 Mb of RAM; system 7.1 or greater; and a Macintosh-compatible CD-ROM drive. Teachers can obtain this free CD-ROM by requesting it on school letterhead addressed to USGS Information Services, Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225.

Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation



Katherine L. Henry,
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Techno-Expo 96 Exhibit Team members Ed Carey, left, and Greig Robertson, center, talk with a home owner, right, at the Techno-Expo 96. Photo: Jim Spotts, ARCC



OSM Employees Honor Teamwork

The OSM's first Public Outreach Award went to the **Techno-Expo 96 Exhibit Team in Pennsylvania** in special recognition and appreciation of the members' exemplary contributions in volunteering their personal time to promote OSM goals.

And the first Team Award went to five OSM groups, nominated by fellow employees in special recognition of the teams' integrity, responsibility, and leadership. **Director Kathrine L. Henry and Deputy Director Ed Kay** announced the winners at a January 10 ceremony.

The Techno-Expo 96 Exhibit Team includes OSM members **Ed Carey, Jim Spotts, Greig Robertson, and Paul Yacovone** as well as School Team members **Jodi Krug and Angel Denner**. The group was honored for its outstanding leadership at the Techno-Expo 96, an annual exposition sponsored by the South Hills Area District Association and the Community Education Foundation of Upper St. Clair in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. About 7,000 students and adults attended. Team Awards went to the:

Acid-Forming Materials Team—**Robert Evans, Scott Fischer, Eric Perry, William Joseph, and Ann Walker of OSM; and state members Paul Askenasy, Keith Brady, Jon Brandt, Gregory Brodie, David Johnson, Scott Roberts, Stuart Miller, William Pack, Joseph Tarantino, and Lynn Volk;**

Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative Team in West Virginia—**Rick Buckley of OSM, state members Greg Adolfson and John Faltis, employees of Anker Energy, Inc. And Dave Bassage;**

Team Fletch—**Joyce H. Atchley, Shirley S. Congrove, Edwin S. Gist, Fletcher T. Hart, Pamela Horne, and Clarence A. Miller, Jr.**



TEAM FLETCH members Shirley Congrove, Fletcher Hart, Joyce Atchley, Pamela Horne, Clarence (Allen) Miller, and Edwin Gist are joined by the Reg 2 Reviewer John Sender, (at left), and former team member Brent Trout (second from right), now at USOA.

Indiana Overall Reclamation Success Team—**Milton Allen, Paul Behum, Ron Griffin, Bill Joseph, Jeff Kingdon, and Russ Miller of OSM, and State members Dan Hause, Dave Kiehl, Eric Langer, Ed Lusch, Todd Sellers, and Jo Yarling of the Indiana Division of Reclamation; and**

Inspection Issue Resolution Team in Indiana—**Charles Taylor, Tim Tate, Ken Foit, Mike Kalagian and Larry Greene of OSM, and State members Kevin Geier, Brad Loveless and Charles Weilbaker.**

Among their efforts, the groups devised teamwork strategies, shared with other teams what they have learned, and provided training recommendations to state and federal management officials. The teams' objective measurement of success and proof of productivity also assisted state officials in their budget justifications.

Acting Director Henry said she and Kay congratulated all the winners for their special efforts, achievements, and valuable contributions to the agency. "We also would like to thank you for your support of the program—as a means to promote excellence and to recognize your fellow employees," Henry said."

The Recognition Program was developed last year by OSM employees, who own and operate the system. The program presents non-monetary awards to recognize excellence among fellow employees as well as state workers, tribal representatives, and members of the public who participate with OSM in carrying out shared mining oversight and reclamation goals. (This program is not associated with the Department Awards and Recognition Program.) OSM employees set the criteria for the Team Award, the Public Outreach Award, and the Gold Star Award, nominate the candidates and select the winners.

OSM Surveys Interests in Prime Farmland Reclamation

OSM is surveying customers to assess their interest in learning more about reclamation of prime farmlands—a topic of interest in agricultural communities where coal mining is carried out. The survey is conducted by representatives of OSM, universities, state regulatory agencies, industry, citizen groups, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

OSM is offering to convene a Prime Farmland Interactive Forum or a series of technical interactive workshops on issues related to prime farmland reclamation. The committee plans to determine who would be interested in attending the forum, obtain ideas for its format, and select topics for discussion.

August of 1997 will mark 20 years of reclaiming prime farmland under the Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Act of 1977. With its promise of post-mining agricultural productivity, prime farmland restoration has been a topic of intense interest. The importance of prime farmland soils to U.S. agriculture has made it one of the most heavily researched topics associated with surface coal

mining, producing volumes of new information on interrelationships among crop production, soil compaction, fertility, texture, and management.

According to OSM officials, the potential impacts of coal mining on prime farmland today are very much different from when the Act was first introduced. Many coal mine operators are successfully attaining their vegetation goals and obtaining reclamation bond release. In some parts of the country, mine operators may be creating prime farmland soils where none existed before.

Deadline for completing the survey is January 31, 1997. People interested in participating should contact the state surface coal mining regulatory agencies. In Illinois, the contact is **Dean Spindler**, (217) 782-4970. The Indiana contacts are **David Kiehl** and **Steve Wade**, (812) 665-2207. To contact **Kimery Vories** (OSM), call (618) 463-6463 extension 103, FAX (618) 463-6470, or e-mail kvories@osmre.gov.

Staff at OSM's Knoxville Field Office talk with visitors during Open House.



Roger Calhoun Takes Reins at Charleston Office

Roger W. Calhoun became the director of OSM's Charleston, Beckley, and Morgantown, West Virginia Field Office on January 6. Calhoun, 43, who has been with OSM since 1978, replaces **Tom Morgan**, who has served as acting director since the death of **Jim Blakenship**.



Roger W. Calhoun

Calhoun graduated from University High School and West Virginia University and worked his way through the ranks of OSM, first as a program specialist in Tennessee and Kentucky, before taking over as Indiana field office director in 1992. Although a West Virginia native, Calhoun isn't a coal mining expert. He expects to rely heavily on the experiences of current staff and the structure of OSM.

"Going back to West Virginia is a new challenge," Calhoun said. "The difference between West Virginia and Indiana are significant, geology wise. West Virginia has issues of stability, acid mine drainage, and different kinds of Appalachian mountain problems. It will be different from the mining issues that come up here," said Calhoun. "I'm ready for a new set of people to deal with, and new issues," he added.

Outreach Vital to OSM Efforts

The Knoxville Field Office's outreach meeting in Dunlap, Tennessee, is a typical example of how OSM agencies across the country are working to improve relationships with their customers and stakeholders. During the 2-hour Open House, OSM employees met and talked face-to-face with coalfield residents and workers. The field office employees answered questions, sought comments, and served refreshments.

"It was an opportunity to provide information on the office's activities and to learn more about the concerns of residents of coal producing areas," said Ron McDowell, a senior reclamation specialist and team leader at the Knoxville office. "We also asked the folks if they were interested in establishing a Citizen Advisory Council for our office."

Residents and coal industry stakeholders from throughout southeast Tennessee attended the meeting, where they saw displays, graphics, and videos on the office's regulatory activities. Also on display were the tools and materials used in mine site and acid mine drainage inspections, pictures of mining and reclamation progressions, narratives and photos describing the phases of bond release, videos on the dangers of abandoned coal mine sites, and a computer program that demonstrated the effectiveness of the applicator violator system.

Handouts were available to explain the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative and a notice provided information on opportunities for citizen involvement in the permitting and inspection process. The Knoxville office planned to follow the August 29 session with two additional outreach meetings, one in Tennessee's central coalfield region and the other in the northern coalfield region.